

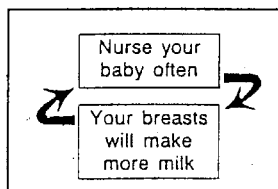
Breastfeeding Basics: The First Six Weeks



How to Make Milk

The more you nurse, the more milk you will have. Breast size does not affect your ability to make milk. If you don't think you have enough milk, nurse more often and nurse longer each time to build up your supply.

The thick, yellow fluid that your breasts first make is called "colostrum". It helps protect your baby from infection. When your milk comes in, usually 2 to 6 days after birth, it will look thin and watery and may have a yellow or bluish color. It is the best food for your baby.



Your breasts may swell when your milk comes in. This swelling goes away around the second week. You are not losing your milk. Nurse your baby on demand. You have enough milk to feed your baby again after 1 to 2 hours, even if you can't see or feel it.

Avoid nursing on a schedule and offering formula, water, or other foods to your baby. These cause your body to make less milk. Be sure to drink to thirst, eat a healthy diet, and get plenty of rest. Check with your doctor if you are taking drugs.

How to Tell If Your Milk Has "Let Down"



To aid "let-down", make yourself comfortable at feedings.

Signs that your milk has "let-down" to your nipples so your baby can nurse may include:

- ✓ A tingling feeling in your breast soon after you begin nursing.
- ✓ Leaking from your other breast while nursing
- ✓ A change in the way your baby is swallowing soon after he starts nursing.

Your Baby's Fussiness and Growth Spurts



Many young babies are fussy in the late afternoon or evening. It is not usually due to hunger, a wet diaper, or anything that you can fix. It is not because you have too little milk or something wrong with your milk. Try not to get discouraged if you have a fussy baby. Comfort him as best you can.

The second week is hard for many breastfeeding mothers. Your baby may go through a growth spurt and be extra hungry and fussy. Your breasts may return to their usual size. This is all normal. Your milk supply is fine. Let your baby nurse often. After about 2 days, your milk supply will build up. Breastfeeding will get easier for you and your baby.

Your baby may have other growth spurts when he is hungrier and needs more milk: around 4-6 weeks, 3 months, and 5-6 months of age.

You Can Prevent Common Problems.

Leaking: Most new mothers leak. You will leak less over time. Until then:

- * During feedings, gently press your other breast to stop the leaking.
- * Wear nursing pads, Use cotton hankies or make your own from soft, clean cotton.
- * Breast or milk cups may cause soreness and more leaking.

Sore Nipples: Soreness is common but not normal when beginning breastfeeding. To avoid getting sore:

- * Change nursing positions often: sit, lie down, use the football hold.
- * Make sure your baby has your entire nipple and much of the brown part around the nipple well into his mouth
- * End feeding by putting your finger in the corner of his mouth.
- * Let your nipples air dry after feedings.

If you are very sore, start feedings on your least sore side. For comfort, put ice on your nipples before feedings and some breastmilk on them afterwards. Let them air dry. Call the clinic for help if you remain sore.

Uncomfortably Full Breasts: Some fullness is normal in the first weeks. However, if milk builds up in your breasts they may feel uncomfortably full, hard, or warm to the touch. This is called "engorgement." To prevent it:

- * Make sure your baby has your entire nipple and much of the brown part around it well into his mouth.
- * Nurse on demand (at least 8-12 times a day) using both breasts.
- * Nurse at night and during the day.

If you are engorged, take the above steps. Also put a warm washcloth on your breasts or take a warm shower. Massage your breasts gently to release a little milk before feedings. Begin feedings on the fullest breast. If your breasts become red and tender, and you have a fever, call your doctor.

Correct positioning your baby on your breast and nursing 8 to 12 times a day will prevent most breastfeeding problems.

Who to Call For Help

Taking care of a demanding, new baby is not easy. You may feel tired and full of doubts. Am I doing the right things for my baby? Do I have enough milk? Can I hang in there? Talking to friends and family about your experiences during your first weeks at home can be reassuring. Who will you call?

- ✓Your mother, aunt, or sister who enjoyed nursing her child(ren):
- ✓Your friend who nursed and enjoyed it:
- ✓The WIC staff, phone:
- ✓A woman you met at WIC or La Leche League classes who enjoyed nursing her child(ren):
- ✓Your doctor:

Your Goal/Notes:

